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COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

Note by the Administrator

1. The proposed third country programme for Afghanistan, covering the period 1984-1986, was not approved by the Governing Council because of the prevailing security situation. At its thirty-first session (1984), the Council concurred with the request of the Administrator to provide continued support for ongoing projects in Afghanistan and to consider for approval new projects consistent with the rules, regulations and normal criteria of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At its thirty-second session (1985), the Council authorized the Administrator, in the absence of a country programme for Afghanistan, for the remaining portion of the third cycle to provide continued support for ongoing projects in Afghanistan, and to consider for approval new projects consistent with the rules, regulations and normal criteria of UNDP. At its thirty-fourth session (1987) the Council agreed to continue this arrangement for the fourth cycle. At its thirty-ninth session (1992), the Council agreed to continue this arrangement further for the fifth cycle.

2. During the fifth cycle, UNDP has delivered substantial assistance through six major projects. As well as utilizing carry-over resources from the fourth cycle, and indicative planning figure (IPF) funds for the fifth cycle, the projects have been able to attract significant cost-sharing and parallel financing. The various operational projects are making an important contribution to the building of stability in those (widespread) areas of the country that are peaceful but that suffer from the absence of a fully functional government and the breakdown of social services; they have also contributed to the return of refugees by establishing conditions that make it increasingly attractive for them to return. Recent evaluations of the main projects,

followed by a detailed programme review mission, have confirmed the appropriateness and success of these programmes, which are having considerable impact within the confines of the prevailing circumstances in the country, and have recommended their extension for a further period of two years. The missi particularly appreciated the role that UNDP has played in the renewal of traditional representative bodies (shuras) for community consultation. By involving local communities in identifying, implementing and monitoring small-scale, participatory activities aimed at the rehabilitation of the social and economic infrastructure, UNDP projects have made important contributions to alleviating poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods, as well as giving local communities a stake in the peace process. Significant achievements have been made in the areas of crop production, veterinary services, irrigation and other rural infrastructure, urban rehabilitation, water supply and sanitation, and the rehabilitation of the disabled.

3. Coordination with the United Nations Humanitarian Programme and all Unite Nations specialized agencies operational in Afghanistan has been greatly enhanced through the creation, with UNDP support, of the United Nations Programme Steering Committee, chaired by the Resident Coordinator, with five regional subcommittees that have brought together United Nations specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local authorities in technical working groups. Systematic coordination with NGOs, who are both donors to Afghanistan and implementing agencies for United Nations programmes, has resulted in several productive partnerships.

4. As a result of continuing civil strife in Afghanistan, it is not feasible to formulate a country cooperation framework. The Administrator therefore see the authorization of the Executive Board to continue to appraise and approve projects for the next two years on a project-by-project basis, consistent with the rules, regulations and normal criteria of UNDP, and within the new guidelines of the successor programming arrangements. When conditions permit, the preparation of a country cooperation framework will be initiated.